

LOUISIANA AGRICULTURAL FINANCE AUTHORITY (LAFA)
DRAFT MINUTES

February 4, 2022

10:00 AM

Zoom -

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84254862015?pwd=SnVBV2xoV1BiOXBRd3lKMDg0SU9rQT09>

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman, Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF) Commissioner Mike Strain at 10:02 AM.

II. ROLL CALL

The roll was called by Melanie Tullier.

Present: Commissioner Strain, Hugh Andre, Kent Brown, Devin Davis, Ronald Petree, Katie Sistrunk, Rep. Christopher Turner, and Bill Waguespack. Jennifer Hill entered the meeting at 10:31 am.

Mrs. Tullier stated there was a quorum with eight members present.

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Melanie Tullier stated that no public comments were received either by email or in the Zoom chat. She reminded the board that the Tier 2.1 Financial Disclosure form, Ethics training, and Sexual Harassment training would all be due soon.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Commissioner Strain asked the board members to review the minutes from the July 1, 2021 meeting.

A motion was made by Mr. Petree to approve the minutes from the July 1, 2021 meeting. It was seconded by Mr. Waguespack. A voice vote was called with the votes recorded below:

Commissioner Strain – Yes

Hugh Andre – Yes

Kent Brown – Yes

Devin Davis – Yes

Jennifer Hill – Not present

Ronald Petree – Yes

Katie Sistrunk – Yes

Representative Turner – Yes
Bill Waguespack – Yes

The motion passed.

V. REVIEW OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Mrs. Catrina Irvin presented LAFA’s Financial Statements to the board and answered the members’ questions.

A motion was made by Mr. Andre to accept the Financial Statements. It was seconded by Mr. Waguespack. A voice vote was called with the votes recorded below:

Commissioner Strain – Yes
Hugh Andre – Yes
Kent Brown – Yes
Devin Davis – Yes
Jennifer Hill – Not present
Ronald Petree – Yes
Katie Sistrunk – Yes
Representative Turner – Yes
Bill Waguespack – Yes

The motion passed.

VI. COMMISSIONER’S REPORT

- Commodity prices are moving in a positive direction.
- A number of different entities donated fuel during the 2021 hurricane season. An additional 15,000 gallon tank was installed at the Baton Rouge Headquarters to increase capacity. During the height of Hurricane Ida, LDAF was distributing 250,000 gallons of fuel per day.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

Commissioner Strain informed the board of a motion he would like to have added to the agenda under Old Business. During the November 18, 2020, LAFA Board Meeting a motion was passed unanimously to allow LAFA to purchase four heavy duty scale test trucks at the cost of \$842,510.00 and lease them to Weights and Measures over 10 years.

Because of the pandemic, we are just now in the process of securing these four heavy duty scale test trucks and the test weights needed to “outfit” the trucks.

We will be asking to amend the cost and loan agreement to include another \$95,000 to purchase the test weights needed to outfit the trucks. The total loan would now be \$937,510.00 and would be lease to Weights and Measures over 10 years.

Commissioner Strain opened the floor for public comment. Mrs. Tullier stated there were no public comments. Mr. Petree made the motion to add this item to the agenda. It was seconded by Mr. Waguespack. A voice vote was called with the votes recorded below:

Commissioner Strain – Yes
Hugh Andre – Yes
Kent Brown – Yes
Devin Davis – Yes
Jennifer Hill – Not present
Ronald Petree – Yes
Katie Sistrunk – Yes
Representative Turner – Yes
Bill Waguespack – Yes

The motion passed.

A motion was made by Mr. Petree to amend the loan agreement regarding four heavy duty scale test trucks to include another \$95,000 to purchase the test weights needed to outfit the trucks. It was seconded by Mrs. Sistrunk. There was no discussion. A voice vote was called with the votes recorded below:

Commissioner Strain – Yes
Hugh Andre – Yes
Kent Brown – Yes
Devin Davis – Yes
Jennifer Hill – Not present
Ronald Petree – Yes
Katie Sistrunk – Yes
Representative Turner – Yes
Bill Waguespack – Yes

The motion passed.

A. Indian Creek

The lake has been drawn down and repairs are being made to the seawall. The Mardi Gras parade will be on February 26th, the Easter Egg Hunt on April 16th, and fireworks on July 4th. The newly constructed RV sites are continuously booked. Educational walking, hiking and biking trails are being constructed.

B. South Louisiana Rail Facility Loan

Michelle Ribera updated the board on the status of the South Louisiana Rail Facility (SLRF). Construction is currently 7% completed. Currently they are constructing foundation shafts. The slab is expected to be poured by March 1st, slipform by May 1st, with substantial completion by September 15th. Equipment installation is expected to begin by November 15th.

Commissioner Strain reminded the board that on February 18, 2021, the SLRF secured a \$2.4 million dollar loan through LAFA. The total project cost is over \$22 million. He has been in discussions to obtain federal dollars to place into LAFA's accounts to either payoff the loan or front the loan.

C. Equipment Shed at LDAF – BRHQ

Mr. Petree made a motion to allow Commissioner Strain to proceed with acquiring bids and proceeding with construction up to \$200,000. It was seconded by Mr. Davis. There was no discussion. A voice vote was called with the votes recorded below:

Commissioner Strain – Yes
Hugh Andre – Yes
Kent Brown – Yes
Devin Davis – Yes
Jennifer Hill – Yes
Ronald Petree – Yes
Katie Sistrunk – Yes
Representative Turner – Yes
Bill Waguespack – Yes

The motion passed.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Proposed legislation for the 2022 Regular Session

Mr. Brown made a motion to move forward with the proposed legislation which will allow the authority to acquire fuel, through purchase, donation, grant or otherwise, and to sell, deliver, or transfer such fuel to any person, firm, corporation, municipality, or federal or state agency for emergency purposes related to a natural disaster. It was seconded by Mrs. Sistrunk and Mr. Waguespack. There was no discussion. A voice vote was called with the votes recorded below:

Commissioner Strain – Yes
Hugh Andre – Yes

Kent Brown – Yes
Devin Davis – Yes
Jennifer Hill – Yes
Ronald Petree – Yes
Katie Sistrunk – Yes
Representative Turner – Yes
Bill Waguespack – Yes

The motion passed.

B. Emergency Fuel Transport Trailers/Depot Proposal

A motion was made by Rep. Turner to proceed with purchasing two 1000 gallon fuel tanks, two 500 gallon fuel tanks, and two portable generators. It was seconded by Mr. Andre. There was no discussion. A voice vote was called with the votes recorded below:

Commissioner Strain – Yes
Hugh Andre – Yes
Kent Brown – Yes
Devin Davis – Yes
Jennifer Hill – Yes
Ronald Petree – Yes
Katie Sistrunk – Yes
Representative Turner – Yes
Bill Waguespack – Yes

The motion passed.

C. Leases

i. Opelousas

Mrs. Tullier notified the board that the construction was complete and that the Acadiana Workforce Development Board would be moving into the facility by the end of the month.

ii. Baton Rouge

A motion was made by Mr. Andre to allow Commission Strain and staff to negotiate with DEQ for the storage of the Mobile Air Monitoring Laboratories (MAMLs). It was seconded by Mr. Davis. There was no discussion. A voice vote was called with the votes recorded below:

Commissioner Strain – Yes
Hugh Andre – Yes

Kent Brown – Yes
Devin Davis – Yes
Jennifer Hill – Yes
Ronald Petree – Yes
Katie Sistrunk – Yes
Representative Turner – Yes
Bill Waguespack – Yes

The motion passed.

iii. Woodworth – Acadian Ambulance

A motion was made by Rep. Turner to allow Acadian Ambulance/AirMed to proceed with subleasing a portion of their lease. It was seconded by Mr. Andre. There was no discussion. A voice vote was called with the votes recorded below:

Commissioner Strain – Yes
Hugh Andre – Yes
Kent Brown – Yes
Devin Davis – Yes
Jennifer Hill – Yes
Ronald Petree – Yes
Katie Sistrunk – Yes
Representative Turner – Yes
Bill Waguespack – Yes

The motion passed.

D. Disaster Recovery Program

i. Louisiana Seafood Processors Pandemic Response and Safety Program

Mrs. Ribera notified the board that LAFA’s application for the USDA Seafood Processors Pandemic Response and Safety Block Grant Program was accepted. LAFA is awaiting final word that the grant has been awarded. This grant will provide \$4,229,669 for administrative cost and grants to seafood processors, at-sea processors and dealers for expenses related to COVID-19.

ii. Louisiana Farm and Timber Recovery Grant Program

Mrs. Ribera notified the board that the State of Louisiana’s Office of Community Development (OCD) is working to secure funds from the

federal government to give to Louisiana producers effected by Hurricanes Laura and Delta. She expects LDAF/LAFA to administer this grant program. She hopes to receive notification of the program in 3-4 months.

E. Bee Grant

Commissioner Strain notified the board that there are currently 30 students participating in the program. The hives have been purchased and assembled, and the bees are in the process of being purchased. He has applied for an additional Specialty Crop Block Grant to further the Bee Grant.

IX. PUBLIC COMMENT

Mrs. Tullier stated there was no public comment either by email or Zoom chat.

X. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Waguespack and seconded by Rep. Turner. It passed unanimously at 10:59 AM.